THE BIBLE SPEAKS

International Uniform Sunday School Lessons

BY DR. KENNETH J. FOREMAN

Background Scripture: Luke 15:11-32.
Devotional Reading: Psalms 103:1-13.

Two Sons

Lesson for November 25, 1956

WHAT does the word "prodigal" mean? Ask some Sunday school class that, and you may be surprised at how many bad guesses you hear. Actually the name simply means "wasteful." Jesus never named his parables; and sometimes the names the church has given them fit, and sometimes not. The parable of the "prodigal son" might be better named "The Two Prodigal Sons" or "The Forgiving Father."

Dr. Foreman

Two Ways of Wasting

There are two ways of being prodigal or wasteful. One is to use up and destroy what might have been saved. If you let good farm machinery sit around in the rain till it rusts, you are wasting equipment. If you use expensive butter for a job a little bacon grease will do just as well, you are wasting the butter. If you are a general and order a useless assault in which thousands of men needlessly lose thir lives, you are wasting human life. All these wasteful acts, great and small, are done in the same way, essentially by throwing away or spoiling what might have been saved and use. Another way of wasting is just not to use what is there to use, something which if you do not use now you will never have the chance to use again. An example of this is water power. The river flows on its way, developing so many horsepower with every mile; if these are not used today, tomorrow the horsepower—today's horsepower—will be gone. You waste water power not by destroying it but by failing to use it.

The Younger Son

Now in Jesus' famous parable, the two sons were both wasters, but in opposite ways. Take the younger one: Give me . . . he said, and off he went. A young fortune was in his hands; but he threw it away, he was through with it, he was through, "period," in no time.

There was something else he wasted; his father's love and confidence. He virtually treated his father as if he were already dead. This younger son is, of course, the type of the reckless sinner who wastes his health, strength, character, perhaps money too, the sort of man who is called a "wastrel" or waster. The time, life, strength that such a man wastes cannot be brought back again. You could go down to Skid Row or to the nearest hospital for drug addicts and convert them every one; but you could never give them back the "years the locusts have eaten." God forgives such men, as the father in Jesus' story forgave the younger prodigal; but just as the father in that story could not recall from the four winds the wasted fortune and the wasted years, so not even God ever turns the clock or the calendar back.

The Older Son

But that older boy—he too was a waster. Only he wasted in the other way, not by destroying but by not using. There seems to be something deeply sad in the father's simple saying: "Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours." This was true—and yet the son had made it untrue. "You are always with me"—so near, and yet so far away. None of the father's spirit had penetrated the boy's mind. He was physically at home yet spiritually a stranger. He too, in a different way, had lived like an orphan. Every day there was open to him a father's heart, a father's sympathy, a father's wealth; but he never took it. If for the younger boy there was waste-by-destruction, for the older there was waste-by-neglect. Did the father forgive this son too? The story does not say. The impression most people get is perhaps what Jesus intended to suggest: The father was ready to forgive each son; but the younger son was forgiven, because he had "come to himself," he had confessed his wrong. The older son was not (so far as the story takes us) forgiven, because he did not seem to be conscious of having done anything wrong. Of course he was the type of the Pharisees; but the Pharisees are not dead. In the church and out there are correct, respectable citizens who know nothing of God's love for their lost brothers, and so have never known the God they officially call "Father." God will forgive such a man too; but perhaps he seldom does, for such a man seldom thinks he needs it.

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Garden Talk

By
Appomattox Garden Club

Let's talk of the Christmas Cactus, one of the most beautiful and popular of our house plants. Think back into the past to the largest Christmas Cactus plant you ever saw, full of pink, pink blossoms too exquisite to describe. The one I remember was huge—maybe not as huge as my memory paints it, but it was an inspiration to all who beheld it on that Christmas some years ago. The slender branches were tumbling over each other with each branch tip weighed down by a delicate, perfect blossom.

Christmas Cactus is one of the most satisfactory plants to grow in the home. Somehow, with the coming of so many outside-the-home activities, the old fashioned Christmas Cactus has been forgotten, or supplanted by the short-lived plants that can be discarded when bloom is finished. But, now, thanks to the increasing interest in home gardening and the use of plant materials in decorating home interiors, this orchid cactus from the Brazilian tropics is again coming into its own.

The Christmas Cactus (Zygocactus truncatus) is a permanent plant, one that can be kept for years with a minimum of care and a maximum of enjoyment. Its graceful, flat arching branches stretch forth in links, each one about 1 to 2 inches long. From October to January the fuchsia-like blossoms form at the tips of the drooping branches. The blossoms are crimson, but there are hybrids that are available in flower colors that range from white through different shades of red to a vibrant cerise. The plant is decorative and attractive, even when not blooming. Its cascading habit makes it an outstanding plant in hanging pots or baskets.

The following tips will be helpful if you plan to have a Christmas Cactus plant:

1. Have a cutting as large as you can get. The cutting will grow only about 6 inches a year, so if you get a cutting too small, you will have to wait longer for a good plant.

2. Insert cutting as deep as the second joint in a 3 inch pot filled with 3 parts garden loam, 1 part sand, and 1-2 part rotted cow manure. No fertilizer need be added. If more than one cutting is planted space them 1 to 2 inches apart. Three or four in one pot make a beautiful plant.

3. Keep the potting soil moist, but not wet.

4. After about 6 months transplant to a 5 inch pot, and at the end of a year, to a 6 inch pot. Allow the plant to develop and get to be a fairly large plant before applying fertilizer to encourage bloom.

5. After the plant has gotten a fine start, put it in a mixture made up of 2 parts loam, 1 part sand, 1 part leafmold, 1-2 part dried cow manure, and to a bushel of this mixture, add a 5 inch pot full of bone meal.

6. Keep a little on the dry side until buds form. Then water moderately. (Too much water at this stage will cause buds to fall off.

7. When the weather warms up in the spring, set the plant in semi-shade in the garden and leave it till the last of August (or mid-September, if you have a late fall). Fertilize once a month during August, September and November.

Then comes December and beautiful Christmas Cactus.

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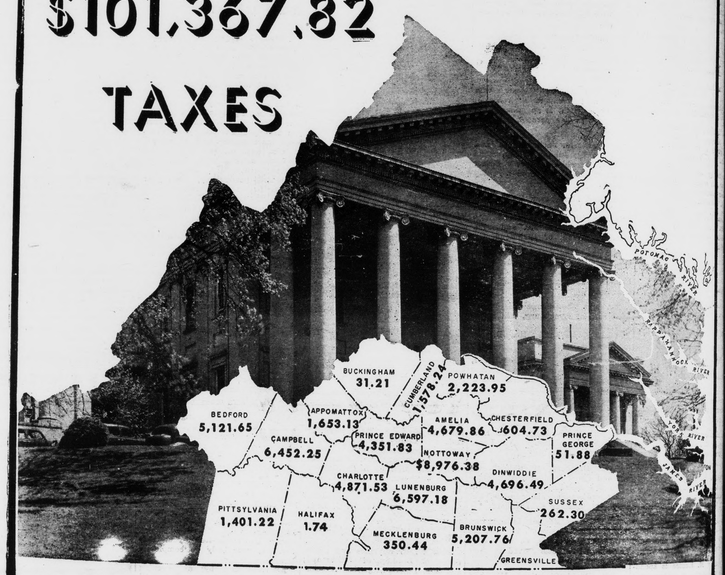

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Charlotte	4,871.53
Chesterfield	604.73
Cumberland	1,578.24
Dinwiddie	4,696.49
Lunenburg	6,597.18
Mecklenburg	350.44
Nottoway	8,976.38
Pittsylvania	1,401.22
Prince Edward	4,351.83
Prince George	51.88
Powhatan	2,223.95
Sussex	262.30
Town of Blackstone	28.15
Halifax	1.74
	$ 59,141.92
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Washington Notes

PRICES UP

the first time in several the price of hogs increasing average prices well those of a year ago, following a few days before to the Oct. since March. The rise attributed to the Agriculture ment's announcement that it ought buying $100,000,000 of pork products to help support prices.

ER AUTOS?

mobile production this year ected to be about 30 per cent that of a year ago, with the ted that there will be no of large inventories.

INESS FAILURES

the small business man is difficulty is apparent from es failures compiled by and Bradstreet. Since the ing of 1956 failures have ed 251 a week, compared a week in the comparable of 1955 and 217 a week in 1954. Failures are running 11 per cent higher this year than they did in 1954.

JOB TOTALS

Employment in October reached 66,200,000, the highest October figure on record, 100,000 above the September total, but 600,000 under the peak figure of 66,800,000 reached during the summer when many students and other temporary workers were employed. Unemployed stood at 1,900,000 at the end of October, 200,000 below that of October, 1955, and "was one of the lowest levels since late 1953."

FARM PENSIONS

More than 140,000 self-employed farmers and members of their families have claimed Old Age and Survivors Insurance benefits this year, according to Commissioner Charles L. Schottland, of the Social Security Administration. These were the first persons to qualify under the 1954 Social Security amendement, that extended coverage to farmers.

SHIPBUILDING

The world's shipbuilding this year reached the highest since the World War II construction boom, according to the American Merchant Marine Institute. In a study of the world's merchant fleets, the institute said that on completion of present construction, the total ocean-going merchant fleet will be 80 per cent larger than it was in 1939 and 27.8 per cent larger than it is now. Great Britain leads as the world's leading shipbuilder, with Japan and Germany in second and third places.

U. S. - ITALIAN PACT

Under an agreement signed in Rome between the United States and Italy, this country has agreed to sell Italy $60,800,000 worth of farm commodities including cotton, corn, tobacco, and vegetable oil. A substantial portion of the amount to be paid will be lent to the Italian Government on a long-term basis for economic development, mainly in southern Italy.

TRADING STAMPS

The current trading stamp "fever" has spread to all states except Utah, Kansas and North Dakota,—which have passed measures limiting their use. More than 400 trading stamp companies are now operating, doing a $600,000,000 a year business, according to the Department of Commerce.

TEENAGERS

It is estimated that there are 16,000,000 boys and girls, aged 13 through 19, in this country, who have $9,000,000,000 to spend each year. This represents money earned or received as allowances. By 1965, this market is expected to expand to 24,000,000 boys and girls, with at least $14,000,000,000 1956-value dollars to spend.

AIR FORCE LOSS

In the last two years, a total of 1,125 Air Force pilots were killed and 1,600 planes destroyed through accident, according to Brig.-Gen. Joseph D. Caldara, director of flight safety research. Even so, the accident rate of the Air Force has been cut from 506 per 100,000 flying hours in 1921 to 16 per 100,000 flying hours today.

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With divine guidance, we and our forefathers fought for, won and preserved the basic human freedoms and the dignity of man. Because of this freedom, America is an inspiration and hope of peoples of many lands whose lives are blighted by the iron curtain of slavery.

More than 300 Thanksgivings ago, the colonists who suffered hardships, privation and hunger, were humbly grateful for a good harvest and offered devout thanks to God for the freedom and security they found in the New World.

This Thanksgiving, we continue that sacred tradition. Families throughout the length and breadth of America should pause to reflect on their good fortune . . . to give thanks for their countless blessings . . . to rededicate themselves to eternal vigilance and prayer to keep the priceless heritage of liberty and spiritual freedom.

The members of the Norfolk and Western Family join feilow Americans everywhere in the observance of this significant day. And let us all remember that this year in America Thanksgiving Day is truly a day for thanksgiving, and prayer for peace throughout the world.

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